

RE: PIKE HILL MINE SUPERFUND SITE

PUBLIC HEARING

August 23, 2022



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US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
AND VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ENGINEERING EVALUATION AND COST ANALYSIS

PUBLIC HEARING RE: PIKE HILL MINE SUPERFUND SITE

Town Hall, Corinth, Vermont

August 23, 2022

1 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: We will now begin
2 the public comment portion of the formal
3 hearing. I'll ask if anybody would like to
4 provide an oral comment. I'll call based on, to
5 signal you'd like to provide an oral comment,
6 please raise your hand. For those attending
7 online, we'll canvass the room first, and then
8 we'll return to the community online.

9 SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is
10 Patricia Coppolino. I am the Senior
11 Environmental Program Manager in the State's
12 Management Section of the Waste Management and
13 Prevention Division at the Vermont Department of
14 Environmental Conservation.

15 The Vermont DEC has reviewed the
16 Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis and
17 offers provisional support for EPA's preferred
18 Removal Alternative. We reserve our full
19 support of EPA's preferred alternative until we
20 have reviewed public comments and EPA's response
21 to these comments.

22 SPEAKER: Testing 1, 2, 3. It's on. Okay.
23 Just for the record, September 3rd is the final

1 date for any comments? Is that correct? That's
2 all I wanted to ask.

3 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Just to clarify,
4 the question was when is the final date for
5 submitting reports to the EPA, written comments,
6 and that date is September 2nd.

7 Those wishing to make a comment by show of
8 hands?

9 SPEAKER: My name is Brad Caswell. I'm a
10 30-plus year resident of Richardson Road. I
11 currently live on property adjacent to the mine,
12 sharing a property line. I have a number of
13 questions, and I will just pose them, and you
14 can answer later.

15 Access route. You have chosen, as far as I
16 understand, Richardson Road from the Brook Road
17 to the site. That means that the Pike Hill Road
18 route which is closer to Route 25 has not been
19 chosen. I'd like to know why. Of course there
20 are more residents there. More people to be
21 injured perhaps by the traffic.

22 There is a third road route in that I think
23 should be considered, and that is really you

1 can, you turn and go up Copper Mine Road and
2 there's a road where you turn to go to the Smith
3 mine that goes right onto the mine property, and
4 all your traffic would be onsite rather than on
5 Richardson Road. I've been on that road many a
6 time on foot, on horseback, I know it's there.
7 You can do it quite easily.

8 The area chosen for erecting your cell or
9 cells is essentially adjacent to Richardson
10 Road. It is the old mine entrance, the main
11 area where the store used to be, subsequently
12 was used for a logging landing so it's quite
13 open and flat. Had some bulldozing done on it.
14 You have abandoned the idea of building your
15 cells within the mine area itself, and the
16 reason posed is that there are bats. What drew
17 you to that decision? What studies of bats made
18 you feel that it's impossible to leave the
19 material in place, not disturb it all over
20 again, and move it close to Richardson Road
21 where we're all going to have to look at it.

22 It's going to be a 40-foot-high hill,
23 treeless. Maybe we don't want to see that. The

1 whole mine today is rather hidden and any of us
2 who've lived here a long time have probably just
3 probed around in that mine probably because it
4 was quite fascinating from a geologic
5 perspective and an archeological perspective.
6 Great deal of it has been destroyed by cutting
7 trees and driving skidders all over everything,
8 but that's beside the point.

9 I'm interested in what the State has
10 imposed as controls over your operations on that
11 site. We have, for example, Act 250. Are any
12 of these things active in your decisions. What
13 role has the State played? I have not been able
14 to find it in the literature that you provided.
15 I think we should know what that is.

16 Finally, it's just the impacts to our
17 residential community in what I call the project
18 area which is from Brook Road on both sides of
19 Richardson Road all the way to the mining site,
20 all the old mining property, and the lands that
21 share a common boundary with that property.
22 They are to me the project site.

23 All of us living in that area are going to

1 be impacted by this operation that now has been
2 hinted at three years, and you've talked about
3 5,000 trucks. Fortunately, tonight you added
4 loads. That's 10,000 trips. That's a lot of
5 trucks over two or three years, whatever it will
6 be, and that has an impact.

7 That traffic is going to raise dust
8 everywhere the trucks are from the entrance to
9 the road all the way up into the mine site, and
10 that is going to be a problem. The trucks, just
11 the traffic is going to interrupt all of us.
12 How are you going to function with that. You've
13 talked about traffic control and so forth, but
14 still, these trucks go by our houses, our
15 driveways, we're trying to get in and out and
16 it's not just loads of dirt. It's going to be
17 everybody in their pickup, everybody in their
18 car, probably the trailers you move in.

19 I mean, there's a whole lot to a project
20 like this that's going to impact a neighborhood.
21 Houses, some of them very close to the road
22 because they're so old, they're going to have
23 you rolling by, spewing up dust, how are you

1 going to approach that. What can you do to help
2 to lessen the impact on those who live here.

3 There's some small impact that we who live
4 here see from this old mine site. I've looked
5 at it all. My background is hydrogeology. I've
6 looked at the acid mine drainage and what's
7 there and downstream and the coating on the
8 rocks and what's in the mine itself and so on so
9 I'm familiar with what you've seen, and the
10 impact seems small to me, smaller than the
11 impact you're going to have on our community. I
12 think that has to be taken into account.

13 Finally, I mentioned it before, visual
14 change. I can envision seeing a big hill, all
15 process on top, grass, no trees, suddenly
16 arising from the Richardson Road on a piece of
17 land we've all driven by a zillion times, and
18 it's just part of our community the way we like
19 it.

20 What are you going to do about that, if
21 anything? Why have you made the decision to
22 pick up all that material and move it, cover it,
23 and treat it the way you do which is all fine,

1 but why there where we have to see it forever.

2 We're going to have to also see all of your
3 site access controls, whatever they might be.
4 Fences, who knows. And annual or whatever the
5 time period access to the site to recondition it
6 and mow it, whatever you have to do with a site
7 like that. How are you going to lessen that
8 impact on those of us who have to look at it
9 most every day.

10 Remember we're not just sitting in our
11 driveways waiting to escape around your traffic
12 load. We go back and forth all kinds of odd
13 times of the day, and it's difficult for you to
14 control all of that traffic to a way that keeps
15 us from being injured in some way.

16 I'm looking for those kinds of answers.

17 Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you.

19 SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is Mike
20 Tagliavia. I don't live very near to where this
21 activity is going to be. It will probably not
22 have a very large impact on me, but this is a
23 small town. This is one of the reasons why I

1 moved here because it's a nice, quaint, quiet
2 small town. I'm hearing a lot of apprehension
3 at this meeting, and I've heard it at one other
4 meeting that I went to.

5 I've got a couple of questions. Number
6 one, when was the budget done? One of those
7 said I believe 18 million and the other was 28
8 million, and you were talking about like this
9 gentleman said very smartly 5,000 truckloads
10 which means 10,000 trips. If this budget was
11 done last year that was before the price of
12 diesel tripled. That means your budget is blown
13 already. Blown. So how can we believe that \$18
14 million budget. I can't. Simply because of the
15 fuel. And that's not just the trucks. You've
16 got massive diesel-powered equipment. So your
17 budget is going to be blown.

18 And why not an Option 3? Do nothing. It
19 sounds like this is not a "may" happen. This is
20 a "it's going to happen, like it or not," and I
21 don't understand why not an Option 3. Do
22 nothing. Is the pollution so bad that the
23 residents who are very concerned here are going

1 to be forced to endure what this project may put
2 upon them. Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Others in person
4 who would like to make a comment?

5 SPEAKER: My name is Susan Fortunati. My
6 husband owns property adjacent to the site that
7 you're going to clean up. My question is isn't
8 gravel and sand a natural filtration for
9 cleaning water? And if it is, why don't you
10 just bring in clean gravel and sand to the point
11 of where that wastewater comes out of the mine
12 and have that water flow through that natural
13 material and have it clean itself naturally
14 rather than doing all this other work?

15 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Others wishing to
16 make a formal comment?

17 SPEAKER ONLINE: I'm online. Can you hear
18 me? I don't know why I can't be heard.

19 SPEAKER: My name is Jane, and I live on
20 Richardson Road. I guess my comment would be
21 again how would it impact my land. Would you
22 have to widen the road for the equipment. And
23 another thing, I was looking at the map, I'm

1 fairly new to the area, and I'm trying to figure
2 out where the mine is relative to my property.
3 So I was looking for maybe numbers or something
4 on the map that would pinpoint that stuff so I
5 would be more well informed.

6 I think that's the only thing I had other
7 than I know the brook runs down below my
8 property, and I didn't know how that would
9 impact below or above the waterway. Would it be
10 sending silt and blocking things and things like
11 that. You know. Just common things like that.
12 All right? Thank you.

13 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Others here in
14 person wishing to make a comment before we go
15 online? Darriel, do you want to open it up?

16 For those online wishing to make a comment,
17 we'll be taking those comments now. Wendy,
18 please?

19 SPEAKER ONLINE: Hi, I'm Wendy
20 Wieland-Alter, and I live on the sharp corner of
21 Richardson Road and Flanders Lane, and I'm not
22 too happy about the number of trucks that are
23 going to be going up and down the road, and I

1 really think that leaving the mines alone may be
2 a better ecological impact than all of the
3 diesel fumes and changing the landscape and you
4 know, it's really not that much brook that's
5 been impacted. It's been impacted for over 100
6 years. Maybe we as humans need to just accept
7 the fact that we have screwed things up, and we
8 should just leave things well enough alone and
9 let us just continue in our nice community with
10 our quiet and safe roads and not have four years
11 or three years of projected disruption to our
12 lives. Thank you.

13 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER ONLINE: Can I speak? Can you hear
15 me?

16 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Yes, next up is
17 Elizabeth.

18 SPEAKER ONLINE: How do I get me name off
19 there?

20 SPEAKER ONLINE: This is Elizabeth's
21 husband, Edward Childs, at 1804 Pike Hill Road.
22 Can you guys hear me?

23 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Yes, we can hear

1 you.

2 SPEAKER ONLINE: Thanks. So my main
3 concern is that that whole mining area is used a
4 lot by recreational vehicles and off-road
5 vehicles, and my main concern is that your
6 careful work of constructing that mound could
7 really be disrupted unless there's some kind of
8 plan to, you know, provide a path or something
9 like that. Otherwise, if it's disrupted kind of
10 randomly by these vehicles, it will kind of
11 leave the site in a worst condition than what
12 it's in now. Thank you.

13 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you. The
14 next commenter is logged in by phone ending in
15 1981.

16 SPEAKER ONLINE: Right. Thank you. Can
17 you hear me?

18 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Yes. We can hear
19 you.

20 SPEAKER ONLINE: My name is Karen Kennedy,
21 and my family has lived on Copper Mine Road for
22 over 70 years so I've listened to all the
23 different comments, and I know my mom is, you

1 know, elderly and in the audience, but I'm
2 wondering what the impact on Copper Mine Road,
3 and the gentleman had mentioned that Copper Mine
4 Road is another access. Yeah, well, that is an
5 access, but it's an easy access maybe to Smith
6 mine but not to the other two mines, and I'm
7 just wondering, she has never gotten any
8 information about any of the plans for this and
9 why all those who could be impacted were not
10 informed by mail versus having to read it in the
11 newspaper, especially for elderly people who
12 have lived there for 70 years-plus.

13 So there's a big impact of people who have
14 lived there long periods of time, and as the
15 woman who previously to this said she had no
16 idea where the mines were, this is something
17 that I feel like the EPA has lacked in giving
18 information out to the community versus having
19 to put it in the paper. I just think that the
20 information should have been handled in a
21 different way so people are more informed and
22 more educated on what you're trying to do.

23 I also believe that people have lived there

1 for hundreds of years, my family living there
2 for 70 years, and we've never been impacted by
3 this, the mine, and as the gentleman just said
4 before, ATV vehicles and motorcycles are up in
5 that area all the time, and they've tried to ban
6 them in the past. How is the EPA going to
7 prevent their mound of protective soil from
8 being disturbed by something like that.

9 So those are some things the EPA needs to
10 consider, and I would like to know what impact
11 the roads are going to cause to people's
12 property. Thank you.

13 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you. Others
14 online? Is there anybody else here in person?
15 Anybody else here in person that wants an
16 opportunity to comment on record?

17 SPEAKER: My name is Irene Mann. I live on
18 Taplin Hill. I'm not that close to the mines,
19 but my question is these mines were last used I
20 think you said in 1940. That's, you know, we're
21 talking 60-plus years here. How much more can
22 this leach? You know, won't this be over with
23 pretty soon? How much more leaching can there

1 be?

2 And I thought Susan Fortunati's comment
3 about trying to use sand and whatever natural
4 resources we have to clean this before it gets
5 into the streams, and I think I asked before if
6 any of those wells were contaminated of the
7 people that live close by, and I believe the
8 answer was no. Am I correct? Well, if the
9 water level isn't, it's mostly the fish and the
10 streams. If we can get that cleared up some way
11 without, you know, and actually I just wish a
12 geologist could answer my question. How much
13 more leaching can there be. It's been a hundred
14 years. I mean, 60 since 1940 but there wasn't
15 heavy mining at that time.

16 And I have another comment. I'm not
17 exactly happy with the way you do your forums.
18 Excuse me, EPA. I hope I don't offend you, but
19 we're asking questions, but we don't get
20 answers. We have to wait. Now, I realize maybe
21 on some you couldn't answer immediately, but for
22 the ones you can I would have appreciated an
23 answer now because sometimes answers lead to

1 more questions. So you're just dragging it out
2 longer I feel, but I may be wrong. Thank you.

3 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you, ma'am.

4 SPEAKER ONLINE: I'd like to bring another
5 point up that we have not yet seen the actual
6 scientific background --

7 SPEAKER: My name is Virginia Barlow. I
8 don't live on Richardson Road. Our property
9 almost abuts the Smith mine from the other side
10 but not quite, but I would have to say I'm
11 really impressed with your presentation. I
12 don't live on Richardson Road, I know, and it's
13 going to be horrible for a couple of years, but
14 I think cleaning up the mine is super important.
15 I mean it's a toxic site, and it should be
16 cleaned up, and it's affecting the ecology
17 downstream in a way that can be fixed, and also
18 if you look at the Elizabeth mine which I don't
19 know too much about, but I've been reading about
20 it in the papers for I don't know how many
21 years, it was a massive operation and it
22 succeeded. There's no more pollution from that
23 mine into the surrounding watershed.

1 So I just want to say, unlike everybody
2 else, I think you're doing a really good job and
3 I think the information has been super,
4 incredible, and that website has, I don't know,
5 a hundred times more information. So that's it.

6 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you. We'll
7 go back to online comments.

8 SPEAKER: Oh, Virginia, I have to disagree
9 with you. I'm going to go along with the rest
10 of the group here. I own the property adjacent
11 to the mine. I've been there 47 years, I think.
12 I've never heard of anyone complaining about
13 anything except one person who has moved from
14 the area who said gee, there are no fish in the
15 brook. Well, the truth is I live next to a
16 brook, and there are no fish in my brook, and I
17 live beyond the mines, and the problem might be
18 that there's hardly any water, and there's not
19 going to be that much water, and it seems like
20 we're making this enormous effort to what?
21 Restore something that never existed? This
22 broad expanse full of fish and people running
23 around catching them. It doesn't make any

1 sense.

2 So I've written down some comments.

3 Anyway, my comment is does this whole operation
4 with its woefully avoidable and probably
5 unavoidable and probably impact on humans and
6 animal health, breathing particulates from 5,000
7 or more truck loads, 10,000 trips? Of material.
8 And the trucks themselves along with the
9 disruption and most probably ill effects on the
10 historic Robie neighborhood which if you are
11 aware of it, and I think we all are, is this
12 tiny little beautiful enclave with this little
13 narrow lane barely passable, and this beautiful
14 approach from the road, but anyway, so what's
15 going to happen to the Robie neighborhood, and
16 again that's the houses close to the road.
17 Noise, debris, upheaval of the road, proximity
18 to some homes to said road, et cetera. Does it
19 make any sense? Who is complaining. And again,
20 it seems like we're addressing this to some fish
21 that might be 6 inches long, but in 47 years I
22 have never seen a fish in my brook, and I'm
23 beyond the mines.

1 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you. Any
2 additional questions online? Wendy?

3 SPEAKER ONLINE: Yes. I would like to see
4 the scientific backing for how you're going to
5 actually protect the bat species. I know that
6 Fish & Wildlife may have some research on this,
7 but I'm not sure what the extent of the research
8 is on our particular bat species in this
9 situation, and I would like someone to address
10 that.

11 HEARING OFFICER KEEFE: Thank you. One
12 last call for comments either online or in
13 person? Okay. Thank you for participating this
14 evening. Remember that the public comment
15 period for making written comments closes on
16 September 2nd. Please see any of the EPA
17 representatives if you have any questions on how
18 to submit a formal comment, and I will now
19 officially close the hearing.

20 (Hearing closed at 7:49 p.m.)

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22
23

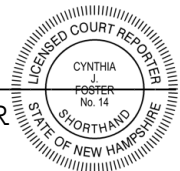
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Dated at Wells, Maine, this 6th day of
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Cynthia Foster
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\$	Act 5:11	brook 3:16 5:18 11:7 12:4 18:15,16 19:22	controls 5:10 8:3	effects 19:9
\$18 9:13	active 5:12	budget 9:6,10,12,14, 17	Copper 4:1 13:21 14:2,3	effort 18:20
1	activity 8:21	building 4:14	Coppolino 2:10	elderly 14:1,11
1 2:22	actual 17:5	bulldozing 4:13	corner 11:20	Elizabeth 12:17 17:18
10,000 6:4 9:10 19:7	added 6:3	C	correct 3:1 16:8	Elizabeth's 12:20
100 12:5	additional 20:2	call 2:4 5:17 20:12	Cost 2:16	enclave 19:12
18 9:7	address 20:9	canvass 2:7	couple 9:5 17:13	ending 13:14
1804 12:21	addressing 19:20	car 6:18	Court 21:3,4	endure 10:1
1940 15:20 16:14	adjacent 3:11 4:9 10:6 18:10	careful 13:6	cover 7:22	Engineering 2:16
1981 13:15	affecting 17:16	Caswell 3:9	cutting 5:6	enormous 18:20
2	alternative 2:18,19	catching 18:23	Cynthia 21:2,16	entrance 4:10 6:8
2 2:22	Analysis 2:16	cell 4:8	D	Environmental 2:11, 14
2022 21:14	AND/OR 21:11	cells 4:9,15	Darriel 11:15	envision 7:14
25 3:18	animal 19:6	CERTIFICATION 21:9	date 3:1,4,6	EPA 3:5 14:17 15:6,9 16:18 20:16
250 5:11	annual 8:4	certify 21:5	Dated 21:13	EPA's 2:17,19,20
28 9:7	answers 8:16 16:20, 23	CERTIFYING 21:12	day 8:9,13 21:13	equipment 9:16 10:22
2nd 3:6 20:16	APPLY 21:10	cetera 19:18	deal 5:6	erecting 4:8
3	appreciated 16:22	change 7:14	debris 19:17	escape 8:11
3 2:22 9:18,21	apprehension 9:2	changing 12:3	DEC 2:15	essentially 4:9
30-plus 3:10	approach 7:1 19:14	Childs 12:21	decision 4:17 7:21	Evaluation 2:16
3rd 2:23	archeological 5:5	chosen 3:15,19 4:8	decisions 5:12	evening 2:9 20:14
4	area 4:8,11,15 5:18, 23 11:1 13:3 15:5 18:14	clarify 3:3	Department 2:13	Excuse 16:18
40-foot-high 4:22	arising 7:16	clean 10:7,10,13 16:4	destroyed 5:6	existed 18:21
47 18:11 19:21	attending 2:6	cleaned 17:16	diesel 9:12 12:3	expanse 18:22
5	ATV 15:4	cleaning 10:9 17:14	diesel-powered 9:16	extent 20:7
5,000 6:3 9:9 19:6	audience 14:1	cleared 16:10	difficult 8:13	F
6	authorized 21:3	close 4:20 6:21 15:18 16:7 19:16 20:19	DIRECT 21:11	fact 12:7
6 19:21	avoidable 19:4	closed 20:20	DIRECTION 21:12	fairly 11:1
60 16:14	aware 19:11	closer 3:18	dirt 6:16	familiar 7:9
60-plus 15:21	B	closes 20:15	disagree 18:8	family 13:21 15:1
6th 21:13	back 8:12 18:7	coating 7:7	disrupted 13:7,9	fascinating 5:4
7	background 7:5 17:6	comment 2:2,4,5 3:7 10:4,16,20 11:14,16 15:16 16:2,16 19:3 20:14,18	disruption 12:11 19:9	feel 4:18 14:17 17:2
70 13:22 14:12 15:2	backing 20:4	commenter 13:14	disturb 4:19	Fences 8:4
7:49 20:20	bad 9:22	comments 2:20,21 3:1,5 11:17 13:23 18:7 19:2 20:12,15	disturbed 15:8	figure 11:1
A	ban 15:5	common 5:21 11:11	Division 2:13	filtration 10:8
abandoned 4:14	barely 19:13	community 2:8 5:17 7:11,18 12:9 14:18	downstream 7:7 17:17	final 2:23 3:4
ability 21:8	Barlow 17:7	complaining 18:12 19:19	dragging 17:1	Finally 5:16 7:13
abuts 17:9	based 2:4	concern 13:3,5	drainage 7:6	find 5:14
accept 12:6	bat 20:5,8	concerned 9:23	drew 4:16	fine 7:23
access 3:15 8:3,5 14:4,5	bats 4:16,17	condition 13:11	driven 7:17	fish 16:9 18:14,16,22 19:20,22 20:6
account 7:12	beautiful 19:12,13	Conservation 2:14	driveways 6:15 8:11	fixed 17:17
accurate 21:6	begin 2:1	considered 3:23	driving 5:7	Flanders 11:21
acid 7:6	belief 21:8	constructing 13:6	duly 21:3	flat 4:13
	big 7:14 14:13	contaminated 16:6	dust 6:7,23	flow 10:12
	blocking 11:10	continue 12:9	E	foot 4:6
	blown 9:12,13,17	control 6:13 8:14 21:11	easily 4:7	forced 10:1
	boundary 5:21		easy 14:5	foregoing 21:5,9
	Brad 3:9		ecological 12:2	forever 8:1
	breathing 19:6		ecology 17:16	formal 2:2 10:16 20:18
	bring 10:10 17:4		educated 14:22	Fortunately 6:3
	broad 18:22		Edward 12:21	

Fortunati 10:5	hydrogeology 7:5	leaving 12:1	mow 8:6	20:13
Fortunati's 16:2		lessen 7:2 8:7		perspective 5:5
forums 16:17	I	level 16:9	N	phone 13:14
Foster 21:2,16		Licensed 21:3	narrow 19:13	pick 7:22
fuel 9:15	idea 4:14 14:16	listened 13:22	natural 10:8,12 16:3	pickup 6:17
full 2:18 18:22	ill 19:9	literature 5:14	naturally 10:13	piece 7:16
fumes 12:3	immediately 16:21	live 3:11 7:2,3 8:20	neighborhood 6:20	Pike 3:17 12:21
function 6:12	impact 6:6,20 7:2,3, 10,11 8:8,22 10:21 11:9 12:2 14:2,13 15:10 19:5	10:19 11:20 15:17 16:7 17:8,12 18:15, 17	19:10,15	pinpoint 11:4
G	impacted 6:1 12:5 14:9 15:2	lived 5:2 13:21 14:12, 14,23	newspaper 14:11	place 4:19
gee 18:14	impacts 5:16	lives 12:12	nice 9:1 12:9	plan 13:8
gentleman 9:9 14:3 15:3	important 17:14	living 5:23 15:1	Noise 19:17	plans 14:8
geologic 5:4	imposed 5:10	load 8:12	number 3:12 9:5 11:22	played 5:13
geologist 16:12	impossible 4:18	loads 6:4,16 19:7	numbers 11:3	point 5:8 10:10 17:5
giving 14:17	impressed 17:11	logged 13:14	O	pollution 9:22 17:22
good 2:9 18:2	inches 19:21	logging 4:12	odd 8:12	portion 2:2
grass 7:15	incredible 18:4	long 5:2 14:14 19:21	off-road 13:4	pose 3:13
gravel 10:8,10	information 14:8,18, 20 18:3,5	longer 17:2	offend 16:18	posed 4:16
Great 5:6	informed 11:5 14:10, 21	looked 7:4,6	offers 2:17	practice 21:4
group 18:10	injured 3:21 8:15	lot 6:4,19 9:2 13:4	OFFICER 2:1 3:3 8:18 10:3,15 11:13 12:13,16,23 13:13, 18 15:13 17:3 18:6 20:1,11	preferred 2:17,19
guess 10:20	interested 5:9	M	officially 20:19	presentation 17:11
guys 12:22	interrupt 6:11	made 4:17 7:21	online 2:7,8 10:17 11:15,16,19 12:14, 18,20 13:2,16,20 15:14 17:4 18:7 20:2,3,12	pretty 15:23
H	Irene 15:17	mail 14:10	onsite 4:4	prevent 15:7
Hampshire 21:5	J	main 4:10 13:2,5	open 4:13 11:15	Prevention 2:13
hand 2:6		Maine 21:13	operation 6:1 17:21 19:3	previously 14:15
handled 14:20	Jane 10:19	make 3:7 10:4,16 11:14,16 18:23 19:19	operations 5:10	price 9:11
hands 3:8	job 18:2	making 18:20 20:15	opportunity 15:16	probed 5:3
happen 9:19,20 19:15	K	Management 2:12	Option 9:18,21	problem 6:10 18:17
happy 11:22 16:17		Manager 2:11	oral 2:4,5	proceeding 21:7
health 19:6	Karen 13:20	Mann 15:17	owns 10:6	process 7:15
hear 10:17 12:14,22, 23 13:17,18	KEEFE 2:1 3:3 8:18 10:3,15 11:13 12:13, 16,23 13:13,18 15:13 17:3 18:6 20:1,11	map 10:23 11:4	P	Professional 21:2
heard 9:3 10:18 18:12	Kennedy 13:20	massive 9:16 17:21	p.m. 20:20	Program 2:11
hearing 2:1,3 3:3 8:18 9:2 10:3,15 11:13 12:13,16,23 13:13,18 15:13 17:3 18:6 20:1,11,19,20	kind 13:7,9,10	material 4:19 7:22 10:13 19:7	paper 14:19	project 5:17,22 6:19 10:1
heavy 16:15	kinds 8:12,16	means 3:17 9:10,12 21:11	papers 17:20	projected 12:11
hidden 5:1	knowledge 21:7	meeting 9:3,4	part 7:18	property 3:11,12 4:3 5:20,21 10:6 11:2,8 15:12 17:8 18:10
hill 3:17 4:22 7:14 12:21 15:18	L	mentioned 7:13 14:3	participating 20:13	protect 20:5
hinted 6:2		Mike 8:19	particulates 19:6	protective 15:7
historic 19:10	lacked 14:17	million 9:7,8,14	passable 19:13	provide 2:4,5 13:8
homes 19:18	land 7:17 10:21	mine 3:11 4:1,3,10, 15 5:1,3 6:9 7:4,6,8 10:11 11:2 13:21 14:2,3,6 15:3 17:9, 14,18,23 18:11	past 15:6	provided 5:14
hope 16:18	landing 4:12	mines 12:1 14:6,16 15:18,19 18:17 19:23	path 13:8	provisional 2:17
horrible 17:13	lands 5:20	mining 5:19,20 13:3 16:15	Patricia 2:10	proximity 19:17
horseback 4:6	landscape 12:3	mom 13:23	people 3:20 14:11, 13,21,23 16:7 18:22	public 2:2,20 20:14
houses 6:14,21 19:16	lane 11:21 19:13	motorcycles 15:4	people's 15:11	put 10:1 14:19
humans 12:6 19:5	large 8:22	mound 13:6 15:7	period 8:5 20:15	Q
hundred 16:13 18:5	LCR 21:16	move 4:20 6:18 7:22	periods 14:14	quaint 9:1
hundreds 15:1	leach 15:22	moved 9:1 18:13	person 10:3 11:14 15:14,15 18:13	question 3:4 10:7 15:19 16:12
husband 10:6 12:21	leaching 15:23 16:13			questions 3:13 9:5 16:19 17:1 20:2,17
	lead 16:23			quiet 9:1 12:10
	leave 4:18 12:8 13:11			R

<p> randomly 13:10 read 14:10 reading 17:19 realize 16:20 reason 4:16 reasons 8:23 recondition 8:5 record 2:23 15:16 recreational 13:4 Registered 21:2 relative 11:2 Remember 8:10 20:14 Removal 2:18 Reporter 21:3,12 Reporting 21:4 reports 3:5 representatives 20:17 REPRODUCTION 21:10 research 20:6,7 reserve 2:18 resident 3:10 residential 5:17 residents 3:20 9:23 resources 16:4 response 2:20 rest 18:9 Restore 18:21 return 2:8 reviewed 2:15,20 Richardson 3:10,16 4:5,9,20 5:19 7:16 10:20 11:21 17:8,12 road 3:10,16,17,22 4:1,2,5,10,20 5:18, 19 6:9,21 7:16 10:20,22 11:21,23 12:21 13:21 14:2,4 17:8,12 19:14,16,17, 18 roads 12:10 15:11 Robie 19:10,15 rocks 7:8 role 5:13 rolling 6:23 room 2:7 route 3:15,18,22 running 18:22 runs 11:7 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <hr/> <p> safe 12:10 sand 10:8,10 16:3 scientific 17:6 20:4 screwed 12:7 Section 2:12 </p>	<p> sending 11:10 Senior 2:10 sense 19:1,19 September 2:23 3:6 20:16 21:14 share 5:21 sharing 3:12 sharp 11:20 Shorthand 21:4 show 3:7 side 17:9 sides 5:18 signal 2:5 silt 11:10 Simply 9:14 site 3:17 5:11,19,22 6:9 7:4 8:3,5,6 10:6 13:11 17:15 sitting 8:10 situation 20:9 skidders 5:7 skill 21:8 small 7:3,10 8:23 9:2 smaller 7:10 smartly 9:9 Smith 4:2 14:5 17:9 soil 15:7 sounds 9:19 speak 12:14 SPEAKER 2:9,22 3:9 8:19 10:5,17,19 11:19 12:14,18,20 13:2,16,20 15:17 17:4,7 18:8 20:3 species 20:5,8 spewing 6:23 State 5:9,13 21:4 State's 2:11 store 4:11 streams 16:5,10 studies 4:17 stuff 11:4 submit 20:18 submitting 3:5 subsequently 4:11 succeeded 17:22 suddenly 7:15 super 17:14 18:3 support 2:17,19 surrounding 17:23 Susan 10:5 16:2 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <hr/> <p> Tagliavia 8:20 taking 11:17 talked 6:2,13 talking 9:8 15:21 </p>	<p> Taplin 15:18 Testing 2:22 thing 10:23 11:6 things 5:12 11:10,11 12:7,8 15:9 thought 16:2 time 4:6 5:2 8:5 14:14 15:5 16:15 times 7:17 8:13 18:5 tiny 19:12 today 5:1 tonight 6:3 top 7:15 town 8:23 9:2 toxic 17:15 traffic 3:21 4:4 6:7, 11,13 8:11,14 trailers 6:18 transcript 21:6,9 transcription 21:6 treat 7:23 treeless 4:23 trees 5:7 7:15 tripled 9:12 trips 6:4 9:10 19:7 truck 19:7 truckloads 9:9 trucks 6:3,5,8,10,14 9:15 11:22 19:8 true 21:6 truth 18:15 turn 4:1,2 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">U</p> <hr/> <p> unavoidable 19:5 understand 3:16 9:21 unlike 18:1 upheaval 19:17 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <hr/> <p> vehicles 13:4,5,10 15:4 Vermont 2:13,15 versus 14:10,18 Virginia 17:7 18:8 visual 7:13 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <hr/> <p> wait 16:20 waiting 8:11 wanted 3:2 Waste 2:12 wastewater 10:11 water 10:9,12 16:9 18:18,19 watershed 17:23 </p>	<p> waterway 11:9 website 18:4 wells 16:6 21:13 Wendy 11:17,19 20:2 who've 5:2 widen 10:22 Wieland-alter 11:20 Wildlife 20:6 wishing 3:7 10:15 11:14,16 woefully 19:4 woman 14:15 wondering 14:2,7 work 10:14 13:6 worst 13:11 written 3:5 19:2 20:15 wrong 17:2 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <hr/> <p> year 3:10 9:11 years 6:2,5 12:6,10, 11 13:22 15:1,2,21 16:14 17:13,21 18:11 19:21 years-plus 14:12 </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Z</p> <hr/> <p> zillion 7:17 </p>
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